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Fact Sheet

HARBOR ISLAND SUEWATERWAY Seattle, Washi



U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

August 2003

Comments Requested on Harbor Island East Waterway Sediment Cleanup

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) invites you to comment on a plan to dredge and dispose of contaminated sediment from a 20-acre area of the Harbor Island East Waterway in Seattle. This fact sheet provides information about that plan, as well as two other alternatives.

Send your written comments on the East Waterway plan by September 2, 2003:

Kevin Rochlin, Project Manager
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Sixth Avenue, ECL-112
Seattle, WA 98101

The plan, described in an Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis, is part of the administrative record for the cleanup available for review at the EPA Region 10 Records Center. You can also view the plan on the EPA Region 10 web site or get a copy from EPA Community Involvement Coordinator Cindy Colgate Schuster. (See *For More Information* on page 3.)



Why Clean Up This Area Now?

Test results show that chemical concentrations in a 20-acre area at the south end of the East Waterway (see map on page 2) exceed State of Washington standards and are toxic to organisms that live in the mud. Contaminants exceeding the standards include polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs. These man-made chemicals build up in fish and can harm human health.

Cleanup of the 20 acres would remove a substantial amount of the sediment in the East Waterway that contains high concentrations of chemicals, including PCBs. Mud-dwelling organisms would have less exposure to contaminants, and fish would have less chemical residue. As a result, people who eat seafood from the East Waterway would also be exposed to less contamination.

Public Meeting Offered

Would you like to meet to hear and ask questions about the plan for the East Waterway?

If so, please contact
Cindy Colgate Schuster
at 206-553-1815 or
schuster.cindy@epa.gov.

What Are the Cleanup Alternatives?

EPA evaluated three alternatives: *no action*; *capping*; and *dredging and disposal*. These alternatives were developed by the Port of Seattle, which is responsible for cleaning up this area of the East Waterway. The alternatives differ in how easy they are to carry out, how effective they are, and how much they cost.

No Action

This alternative provides a baseline for comparing other alternatives. The site would be left as it is. Because no work would be done, this alternative would not reduce exposure to contaminated sediment.

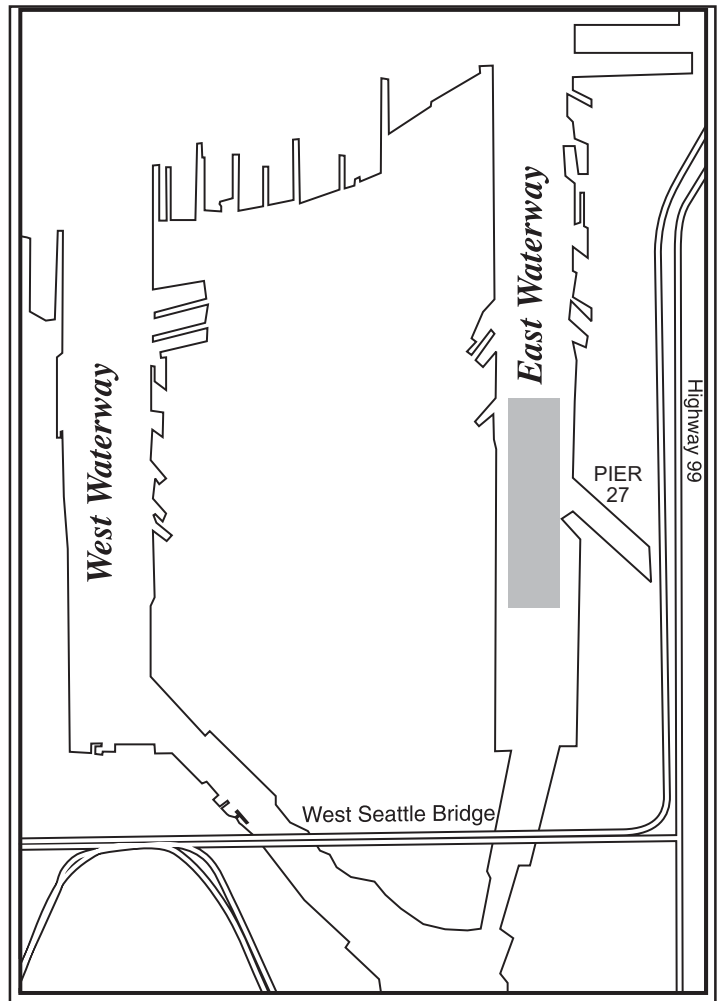
Capping

For this alternative, a barge would be used to place the cap, mainly fine sand, over the contaminated sediment. Work would take about four months. There are several details to consider:

- The cap would be effective because it would isolate the contaminated sediment from the surrounding environment.
- The cap, about 3 feet thick, would make the waterway shallower. It would not have the navigation depth needed for full access to Port of Seattle terminals.
- The cost would be about \$5 million.

Dredging and Disposal

This alternative consists of dredging about 200,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediment to be disposed of at an appropriate landfill, and



About 20 acres offshore near Pier 27, shown by the shaded area, would be cleaned up under the East Waterway plan.

about 59,000 cubic yards of clean sediment to be disposed of in an Elliott Bay disposal area. Work would take two in-water construction seasons. Below are details to compare with the other alternatives:

- Dredging and disposal would be effective because a large amount of contaminated sediment would be removed, and the new sediment surface would be significantly less contaminated.
- The waterway depth would allow full access to Port of Seattle terminals.
- The cost would be about \$17 million.

EPA and the Port of Seattle Prefer Disposal and Dredging

EPA is proposing to adopt the dredging and disposal alternative, because it should protect human health and the environment, and also allow full access to Port of Seattle terminals. The Port also prefers this alternative. The Port has agreed to clean up the sediment, along with dredging for navigation. Let us know what you think about this proposal, or the other alternatives, by writing to us during the public comment period announced on the first page of this fact sheet.

What Happens Next?

EPA will consider all written comments received on the alternatives and respond to them in a document called a Responsiveness Summary. We expect a decision in time to begin work in 2003. A cleanup is expected to take two construction seasons. Construction in the water can take place only when it is least harmful to fish, from about August to the middle of February each year.

The investigation of the contamination in the East Waterway is ongoing. More cleanups will occur where needed.

Background

Harbor Island lies at the mouth of the Duwamish Waterway on the southern edge of Elliott Bay. It was constructed between 1903 and 1905 from sediments dredged from the Duwamish Waterway to create the East and West Waterways and the navigational channel of the Lower Duwamish Waterway. The island has been used for ship-building and maintenance, lead smelting, and other industrial activities.

In 1983, after finding hazardous substances in soils on the island and in sediments near the island, EPA added Harbor Island to its National Priorities List (NPL). The NPL is a roster of sites targeted for further investigation and possible cleanup under EPA's Superfund program.

EPA divided the site into units for investigation and cleanup purposes. The Washington State Department of Ecology is overseeing the work on the tank

farms unit. EPA is overseeing the work on the Lockheed and Todd Shipyards, East and West Waterways, and soil and groundwater units.

For More Information

The East Waterway cleanup plan and other site documents are available at the EPA office at 1200 Sixth Avenue in Seattle. If you would like to review any of these documents, please call the Records Center at (206) 553-4494 to arrange a time.

The plan and some other Harbor Island documents are available on the EPA Region 10 web site:

<http://www.epa.gov/r10earth/>

Click on "Index," then "H," and then "Harbor Island Lead."



United States
Environmental Protection
Agency

Region 10 (ECO-081)
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HARBOR ISLAND EAST WATERWAY
PLEASE COMMENT BY SEPTEMBER 2, 2003

HARBOR ISLAND

If you have questions about the East Waterway cleanup, please contact one of the following persons:

General information:

Cindy Colgate Schuster
Community Involvement Coordinator
(206) 553-1815
schuster.cindy@epa.gov

Technical information:

Kevin Rochlin
Project Manager
(206) 553-2106
rochlin.kevin@epa.gov

For people with disabilities: please call Cindy Schuster to request reasonable accommodations. For TTY users: please call 1-800-977-8339 and give the operator Cindy Schuster's phone number.